

Return to Limerick



The Family returned to Limerick in 1909 on the death of the GS&WR auditor Mr. Cole in April of that year, a position Michael Joseph now held until 2 weeks before his death in 1912. On the night of the 2nd April 1911 the census records them at their new address of 2 St. John's Villas, Mulgrave St. This is a much better house than their old house in Colooney St. The house has 7 rooms with 4 windows to the front and a rateable value of £14.

There are names missing. Jim is recorded in Agra, India. Kathleen is living in Tralee and training as a milliner, Margaret died in 1906 in Waterford and John died earlier in the year (4th Feb) at home.

Mary (Mollie) might have been ill at this time as she died later in the year (July). Did Jack and Mollie both die from consumption? Well PJG recorded the cause of death for his brother Jack as 'galloping consumption', i.e. TB, but we have no definite record for Mary; the graveyard entry indicates she died at home.



1 St. Johns Villas, Mulgrave St.

Both John and Mollie are buried in the same grave in Mount St. Laurence cemetery, further out of Limerick on Mulgrave St. The gravestone records that he died on 4th February and Mollie the 15th July. He was 26 and she 25.

There is a Limerick Chronicle death notice for Jack dated 7th February but it merely states in a couple of lines; who he was and when he died. There seems not to be the sort of obituary afforded his sister.



Mary (Mollie) Guerin?



Mary (Mollie) Guerin?

Below are the funeral reports for Mollie.

Funeral of Miss Mary Guerin

The funeral took place on Monday for Mount St. Lawrence Cemetery of Miss Mary Guerin, the eldest daughter of Mr Michael J Guerin, District Auditor of the G S & W R. The deceased, who passed away at the early age of 25 years, was of a most amiable disposition, and her loss is keenly felt by relatives and friends. The funeral cortege was of large proportions.

The clergy present were—Rev Fr Connolly, O.C, St John's; Rev Fr McNamara, O.C, do; Rev Fr McWilliams, S.J, and Rev Father O'Reilly, S.J.

The chief mourners were—Messrs Michael J Guerin (father), P J Guerin (brother), and M Freeman (uncle).

Amongst the general public present were—Messrs J. McOutehoun, E. McOutehoun, A. McOutehoun, Thomas Buckley, J. Buckley, V. Buckley, J. Harriman, M. Vane, P. McCarthy, E. Gleeson, J. Hill, W. Gale, H. Gale, J. King, George Wilson (Goods Agent, G S & W R), W. Mills, J. McDermott, E. Miller, M. O'Brien, J. Lister, T. Tuite, M. O'Donovan, N. Gale, J. Carr, J. Bowler, O. Gleeson, E. Wallace, J. Mullane, P. Ryan, J. Fitzpatrick, J. J. Forrest, T. Ford, J. H. Meera, M. O'Doherty, J. D. Haurahan, J. Guinane, P. Fennell, P. O'Brien, J. Bartley, J. J. Goherty, J. Burke, P. Griffin, O. G. Carey, J. Hayes, J. P. Toomey, M. Griffin, W. Hickey, E. Hayes, J. Guerin, G S & W R; B. Lunt, B. Oashin, J. O'Sullivan, W. Sample, P. Maher, J. Hogan, T. Lynch, W. Hickey, E. Powell, J. Leighton, O'Callaghan, J. Sheehan, J. McGill, etc.

Amongst the wreaths sent were—From her sorrowing parents, brothers and sisters, and uncle; also from J McOutehoun, Nellie O'Dea, and Mrs Lane and family, London.

Rev Father Connolly officiated at the graveside.

Death of Miss M. Guerin

We deeply regret to announce the death of Miss Mollie Guerin, eldest daughter of Mr Guerin, Auditor, G S & W. Railway, who died at her residence, 2 St. John's Villas on 15th inst. Deceased lady, who had only reached the age of 25 years, had been suffering for some weeks. Her premature demise is felt not only by her sorrowing parents and family but by a large circle of friends with whom she was a great favourite. She died a most edifying death fortified by the rites of the Church. The remains were conveyed to Mount Saint Lawrence Cemetery on Monday accompanied by numerous friends.

The chief mourners were:—M. J. Guerin (father), P. J. Guerin (brother), and M. Freeman (uncle).

The Clergy in attendance were:—Rev Fr. Connolly, O.C, Rev Fr. Macnamara, O.C, Rev Fr. McWilliams, S.J, and Rev Fr. O'Reilly, S.J.



Michael Joseph?

By the next year Dad, Michael Joseph, was also ill with consumption. The letter overleaf he wrote to his employers to request that he be relieved of his duties and that they might ease him into retirement with a payment in lieu of a pension. He understands that he is not entitled to a pension as he was too old at amalgamation of the railway companies (1901) to join the GS&WR pension scheme.

Refer to

in your reply

Great Southern & Western Railway.

Audit Inspectors Office.

Limerick

3rd

June

12,
19th

Reference to

your Letter

Dear Sir,

Owing to failing health I would wish to retire from the Company's service if the Board of Directors could see their way to grant me a lump sum retiring allowance.

Through no fault of mine I am not in the superannuation Fund, for, as you are aware, there was no such Fund in connection with the late Waterford Limerick & Western Ry. and after amalgamation of that line with the G.S.W. Ry I was, on point of age, ineligible for membership of latter company's Fund.

I have 43 years continuous Railway Service with W.L.W. and G.S.W. Ry. companies and during that lengthened period have endeavoured to the best of my ability to give satisfaction in the discharge of my duties and my record has been an unblemished one.

My family are in a delicate state of health and they are dependant on me for their living.

Trusting that you will use your influence with the Board on my behalf.

J. H. Burke Esq.

Audit Accountant
Dublin.

Yours truly
M. J. Guerin
District Auditor.

Hanora was in Dublin on the 31st of May 1912. We have a copy of Dicken's "The Old Curiosity Shop" she inscribed with her name, the date and that she was in Dublin. It was a Friday and on the Monday Michael Joseph writes his letter to the management. I have copies of two letters resulting from this where officials try to decide what to pay him. On the 17th a letter from the accountant's office at Kingsbridge Terminus in Dublin states that 43 years service with the GS&WR would entitle him to an annual pension of £129:2:10 on scheme 'A' and on the 'B' Fund £553. The official dealing with the matter states that all the figures are unverified for the period before 1890 and cannot be corroborated by official records. The other document I have records that his salary in 1912 was £250 and that he has held the office of Audit Inspector for 24 years. The decision is given on 21st June that a one off payment of £250 is to be made.

RESIGNATION OF RAILWAY OFFICIAL.

Mr. M. Guerin, Auditor for the Limerick district, Great Southern & Western Railway, has resigned his position, consequent, it is stated, on impaired health. He had been for many years engaged in railway work in Limerick, and was looked upon as a painstaking, capable, and courteous official, and the news of his resignation will be received with regret. He was the faithful servant of the Waterford and Limerick Railway Company, and at the amalgamation his services were transferred to the Great Southern and Western Railway Company and he was held in the highest esteem by the directors and his colleagues. It is the earnest wish of his many friends that Mr. Guerin's health may improve and with a cessation from active duties and that he may be long spared to enjoy the superannuation allowance to which his long service entitles him.

He died one month later only some few days after he had retired. He too succumbed to what can only be presumed to be TB. He speaks of the 'delicate state of health' of his family. This was a euphemism for TB. It is particularly ironic that three members of the family, four if Margaret too succumbed to consumption, died from an illness that is now inoculated against using the B.C.G. injection. Bacillus Calmette-Guerin. Working at the Pasteur Institute around this time, pharmacist Calmette and his colleague, veterinarian Guerin were working to develop a vaccine. The first inoculations were performed in 1921.

Michael too was buried in Mount St. Laurence cemetery but in a new grave. Plot number 116 Ec. Perhaps this new plot was required because of the two burials in the original plot the previous year. His date of death is recorded on the grave stone as 25th July 1912. The following are the press reports of the funeral.

Death of G. S. & W. R. District Auditor.

We regret to have to announce the death, which occurred on Sunday morning at his residence, Asylum Road, of Mr. M. Guerin, District Auditor Great Southern and Western Railway. Deceased, who had been fairly advanced in years, was an officer of the Waterford and Limerick Railway Company prior to its absorption by the G. S. and W. R. Co. at which period he was appointed auditor on the combined lines, a position he held up to the time of his late illness, some few weeks ago. He carried the confidence of his employers and was much respected by that section of the staff with whom his official duties brought him in contact. He leaves a widow and family to mourn his demise to whom general sympathy goes out in this hour of their affliction.

DEATH OF MR. M. J. GUERIN.

We regret to record the death of Mr. Michael J. Guerin, which occurred at his residence, St. John's Villas, Mulgrave-street, on Sunday morning. He had been in indifferent health for the past three months, and during the past fortnight he was unable to discharge his duties as auditor for the Limerick district of the Great Southern and Western Railway. Consequent on failing health he resigned his position some time last week, to the regret of his employers and colleagues alike. The deceased had a wide and varied experience of railway work. He commenced as a junior on the old Waterford and Limerick Railway, and by his ability and attention to duty rose in the service until he was promoted auditor, a position he filled with the utmost capability. On the amalgamation in 1900 he was sent as auditor to the Kerry district, and two years ago, on the demise of Mr. Cole, he was transferred to the Limerick district. He was held in the highest esteem by his authorities, and his genial and affable manner endeared him to many friends, who will regret his death, and in this the hour of sympathy of the public family in the

By the following year 1913 the family, Hanora, Patrick, Bridget and possibly Kathleen moved from Mulgrave St. to 2 Lord Edward Terrace, Roxborough Rd. The house had a rateable value of only £7, half of that of Mulgrave Street, Patrick is shown as the rate payer in 1914.

On the 8th of March the eldest Jim was re-engaged to serve for another tour of duty with the Royal Irish Regiment, to complete 21 years service under the colours. Perhaps on the back of this he was elevated to the rank of Sergeant on 4th April. Clearly he was looking to a long career in the army. In June of that year PJG went to see him in Clonmel. He had been back in Clonmel for six weeks at this time. They went for a drink in the local, O'Reilly's Pub. A bottle of stout for James and a lemonade for PJG. Interesting to note that PJG recalls this as the 'Local' but the pub was on the north side of Clonmel on the road to the station. It must have been the first pub that someone walking into Clonmel from the station would have encountered. Miss O'Reilly recognised PJG as being the son of Michael Joseph but when challenged she said she did not recognise James at all. He was very annoyed as he was proud of the fact that he was like his late father. He had very tanned hands and face at this time and took some seven years to recover his normal complexion. Interesting that Michael Joseph was known by the publican of the nearest pub to the station.



Lord Edward Terrace



Map of Clonmel 1905

On the 17th July James married Mary Helen (Nellie) Tier at St. Peter and St. Paul's church, Clonmel.

She was the second of four children of Matthew and Margaret Tier (nee Rose). Matthew was a retired soldier and had died before the time of the marriage. Matthew was Dublin born into a large family and enlisted on 18th July 1878. He married Margaret Rose (born New Zealand 1864) in Malta on 21st June 1884 and Elizabeth the eldest was born there the next year. They were transferred to Clonmel where Ellen (27th June 1886) and John (30th April 1890) were born and then to Limerick

after Matthew retired from the army where Roseanne was born (30th May 1898). At the time of her birth the Tier family were living up the road (58 Colooney St.) from the Guerins.

By 1901 they are in 14 Barrack Hill but Matthew has died in the two years since Roseanne was born. John Tier followed his father into the army in the Royal Irish Regiment. His records seem to have been destroyed so we have little record of him. His medal record does exist and shows he was discharged on 19th Dec 1914 having served in France in the first world war. It might be that he joined around his 16th birthday in 1906, either way in the 1911 census he and James Guerin were in barracks together in Agra, India.



Matthew and Ellen Tier

Perhaps Ellen was introduced to James Guerin by her brother some time they were home. In the 1911 census she was in Liverpool but at the time she married

James she was working as a barmaid in Clonmel living in O'Connell Terrace. The witnesses were a friend of James in the army, Thomas Wilkinson and his new sister-in-law Elizabeth Tier.

So, recently married and having signed up to stay another 9 years we now find James leaves the army to look after his mother and family. He was discharged from the British army on the 16th September 1913 and returned to Limerick with his new wife. PJG remembers they came to live with him, Hanora and Kathleen and Bridie at 2 Lord Edward Terrace. James weighed only 6 stone though he stood some 5' 9 1/2" and took some six months to recover from the malaria. He suffered bouts for the rest of his life though.

The following year they had twin boys, Patrick and Michael Joseph, born on the 30th March 1914. This was about the time that he was taken on as a clerk in the running department of the GS&W Railway. John Anthony (Jack) arrived some 15 months later on 16th June 1915. But later that year another of the family died. Bridget (Bridie) died aged only 23, another tragically short life. Her address is given as 1 Lord Edward Place (which might be a mistake, it should be Terrace).

One of the twins, Patrick lived only one year and nine months and was buried on 24th Jan 1916 alongside his grandfather and his aunt Bridie. The address given in the burial record is quite indistinct but appears to be 13 Wolfe Tone Terrace. According to the rates book of the time, this was the address of one Shirley W O'Neill who according to the 1911 census was a 2nd Corporal in the Royal Engineers. He is shown to be the rate payer from 1914 to 1919, so he moved in sometime in the 1913-14 period. His military record indicates that his two children were born in Limerick. Shirley Jnr. On



Wolfe Tone Terrace

24th July 1908 and George on 8th Oct 1913 respectively. He is then shown to be serving in France in by 4th August 1914 and his family move back to Chatham in Kent where they had married before coming to Limerick.

So his house became vacant just around the time that James and Ellen needed a home. It is therefore most probable that James and Ellen moved in once the O'Neills had left in 1914. PJG certainly remembers this address in his memoirs. In 1919 James is shown to take over the rates for this property. And is shown living there until 1927. It might be that due to the war the war office continued to pay the rates until 1918 so he did not have to register for the rates until 1919. Due to his discharge from the army James was very lucky to be spared the horrors of the first world war.

Ireland was not though a peaceful place to live at this time. The British general election of 1918 saw the Home Rule party obliterated by Sinn Féin. Their rise to prominence was as a direct result of the extreme manner that the British dealt with the Easter Rising of 1916, making martyrs of the leaders. The population at large turned to Sinn Féin to gain independence for Ireland rather than the Home Rule party which wanted a parliament for Ireland but still part of the United Kingdom. The 73 newly elected Sinn Féin MPs refused to go to Westminster and so the 27 who were free (all the others were in Gaol) met in January 1919 and drew up an Irish Declaration of independence and took the title 'Dáil Éireann' for their Dublin parliament. In March the British released all the Sinn Féin prisoners to try and calm the public mood. But the first shots of the war of independence were fired in the early months of 1919. The very day that the Dáil Éireann was set up in Dublin the first casualty of the IRA was killed in Soloheadbeg, Co. Tipperary. The war was a guerilla war with small skirmishes rather than battle lines and trenches.

The war ground on until 1921 until both sides were ready for peace. The British realised they could never win the war, the IRA that while they could never lose, they could never really win either. In July 1921 a truce was agreed. The 1920 Government of Ireland Act had split the country and created Northern Ireland with its own parliament in Belfast. Northern Ireland remained very much a part of the United Kingdom and so the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 was negotiated in London in October 1921 against this background. After two months the Irish leaders under Michael Collins duly signed and the Irish Free State was born. The Irish could have its own parliament, army, police force but would continue to recognise the British King as the head of state and the country would be permanently partitioned.

The treaty split Sinn Féin and the IRA but after Collins had led the debate in the Dáil, the treaty was passed in January 1922 by sixty-four to fifty-seven. The treaty would be honoured.

In March 1922 a group of extreme republicans led by Rory O'Connor took over the Four Courts in Dublin. The first week of the civil war was the bloodiest, as central Dublin was devastated for the second time in ten years. The garrison in the Four Courts were shelled into submission. And as we know many of the historical documents of Ireland were destroyed in the fire that ensued including the census documents from 1821-1861.

After the defeat in Dublin the war moved to the Irish countryside where men who fought shoulder to shoulder a year earlier now turned on each other. The Republican cause was doomed from the start. They had to try the same guerilla tactics as before but now against the Free State Forces who had the support of the majority of the population. Only in Munster (Limerick and Waterford included) could they rely on strong support. In the first Free State election held just before the outbreak of fighting the Republicans only polled 22 percent of the vote. By mid 1923 the Republican leaders realised that further struggle was useless. In May they lay down their guns and the war ended without treaty or talks. The bitterness lingered for many years and former friends and family would never speak again.



In Limerick the Easter rising passed without a shot being fired. The public at large had no stomach for the rising and its aims but the leaders were very harshly put down in Dublin and the tide began to turn. One of the chief influences in working towards a feeling of sympathy was Bishop O'Dwyer of Limerick (1886-1917). PJG recalled that his two oldest brothers, Jim and Jack had been confirmed by bishop O'Dwyer. He penned a famous letter to General Maxwell condemning him for the protracted executions and deportations arising from the Easter Rising. He called it an abuse of power and added that "Sinn Fein" was to his mind the true principle. He expressed all this when elevated to the freedom of the city.

The Irish Republican Brotherhood were re-invigorated by this and after ten years in the political wilderness their principles were now put into practice. And so the war of independence was waged against British rule on two planes – military and administrative. The January 1920 borough elections resulted in a Sinn Fein majority. Michael O'Callaghan the first Sinn Fein mayor and later that year a Sinn Fein County Council. The tide was definitely turning. This new wave of Sinn Fein administration sought to sideline the British administration by creating their own bodies.

The war of independence saw two mayors were victims of the unrest. One shot in front of his family by the Black and Tans on 6th March 1921. A tense situation prevailed in the city from February 1919 onwards. Two RIC men were shot and some prisoners rescued before the city was placed under martial law. No one could enter or leave without a permit, workers went on strike and food ran short. Boats with muffled oars ran food into the beleaguered city from the Clare side.

Once Michael Collins got the Limerick men into the fray seventeen RIC barracks were destroyed in and around the city. By June (1919) the Black and Tans arrived and they adopted terror tactics. They shot indiscriminately in the streets. An 8pm to 5 or 6 am curfew was imposed on Limerick and the surrounding towns. They looted, burned and arrested recklessly.

After the treaty Limerick was firmly part of the “Munster Republic” which was anti-treaty and by Feb. and March 1923 there started skirmishes between pro and anti treaty forces. This led to the “fourth siege of Limerick”. The new Irish army came into Limerick on 23rd Feb and took over various barracks from the departing British Army. By June it was decided that for the sake of the citizens of Limerick the republicans should leave and tried to on the night of 7th July. The republicans were shot at and the ensuing battle lasted ten days. Food ran short and there was much damage to buildings including King John's castle. I was several years before real peace and settlement came.



I add this to flavour what life might have been like in Ireland in the period 1919 to 1923.

Hanora died in 1917 and was buried alongside her husband, Daughter and Grandson.

James and Ellen were blessed with two more sons, James Alphonsus (29th Nov 1917) and Raymond Augustine (26th Jan 1919). But Ellen was seriously ill with Spanish Flu when Raymond was born and succumbed 17 days later (12th Feb 1919). She was buried in the first Guerin plot alongside Jack and Mollie.



Guerin Grave 2 116 Ec



Guerin Grave 1 82 Qc

Michael Guerin 25th July 1912
 Hanora 23rd July 1917
 Daughter Brigid 5 Dec 1915
 Daughter Kathleen 7 Mar 1933
 Michael Freeman 5 Nov 1927
 Patrick J Guerin
 9 Oct 1899 - 8th Oct 1975
 On the side
 Paul Guerin 9th Feb 1981

Nellie Guerin 12th Feb 1919 32 Years
 John Guerin 4th Feb 1911 26 Years
 Mollie Guerin 15th July 1911 25 Years
 Bridget Guerin 29th Nov 1979
 On the side
 James Guerin 11th Nov 1963
 Rita Guerin 2nd Nov 1964
 Raymond Guerin 4th? June 1991

It is around this time that the rates books record that James took over 13 Wolfe Tone Terrace. But James had very pressing problems now. He had four sons under 6 and no-one to help.